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Twenty-first progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1885 (2009) of 15 September 2009, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) until 30 September 2010, and requested me to report on progress made in achieving the core benchmarks set out in my reports of 8 August 2007 (S/2007/479) and 19 March 2008 (S/2008/183). The present report focuses on the major developments in Liberia since my progress report of 17 February 2010 (S/2010/88) and provides my recommendations for the renewal of the Mission's mandate.

II. Major developments

A. Political developments

2. Preparations for the presidential and legislative elections to be held in 2011 intensified during the period. Civil society and other stakeholders stepped up pressure on the legislature and the President to resolve the impasse on the Threshold Bill, which establishes a threshold for constituency reapportionment. Earlier versions had been vetoed twice by the President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, for constitutional and financial reasons. On 22 July, the legislature passed the Bill and it was signed by the President on 2 August. The legislature's compromise maintains the 64 electoral districts from the 2005 elections while allocating nine new seats to the more populated counties, avoiding use of the 2008 census. Earlier, a writ of prohibition was filed by a civil society organization in the Supreme Court against the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services, the National Elections Commission and the legislature claiming that the 2008 census was flawed and should not be the basis for voter registration. The full bench of the Supreme Court heard the case, but has not issued a ruling. Many critical electoral preparations were hindered while the debate over the threshold stalled in both houses.

3. On 1 April, the Senate adopted a resolution proposing a referendum to amend two elections-related provisions of the 1986 Constitution, moving Election Day from October to November and deciding all elections by a simple majority of votes, except for president and vice-president, which still require an absolute majority. The

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House, on 13 July, adopted a resolution amending four constitutional provisions, including reducing the residency clause to five years for presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Constitutional amendments require ratification by two thirds of voters in a national referendum held at least one year after adoption by the legislature. Delayed agreement on the joint resolution, according to the National Elections Commission, limits the feasibility of holding a referendum on the proposed amendments before the 2011 elections.

4. After the signing on 14 April of the United Nations electoral support project with the Government, a donor coordination group was established to coordinate its implementation and mobilize resources to cover remaining gaps for the elections. More than $32 million has been pledged towards the overall projected cost of $38.3 million. This amount does not include costs associated with any run-off elections should the constitutional referendum not be held in time. The National Elections Commission's allocation in the national budget for the 2010/11 fiscal year is expected to increase, and international partners are focusing on long-term capacity-building for the Commission.

5. Aspiring candidates and political parties have started preparations for the 2011 elections. So far, seven candidates, including President Johnson-Sirleaf, have declared their intention to contest the presidential election. Meanwhile, the 17 registered political parties have explored mergers and alliances. The Unity Party's merger with the Liberia Action Party and the Liberia Unification Party is nearly finalized. Eight opposition parties, led by the Congress for Democratic Change, continue discussions to form a "grand coalition". An emerging third group includes the Liberty Party and some key members of the National Patriotic Party and the new Democratic Alternative Movement (the New Deal Movement) under the umbrella of the Democratic Alliance. Five new parties are in various stages of registration with the National Election Commission; their successful registration would bring the total of registered parties to 22.

6. The National Elections Commission organized a by-election on 20 July to fill a House vacancy following the death of a River Gee County legislator. The run-off, which was conducted on 3 August, was won by the Unity Party candidate. The by-election, the ninth since 2006, was another opportunity for the Commission to improve its capacity.

7. In compliance with the Act establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the President submitted her first quarterly report on progress in the implementation of the recommendations in the Commission's report to the legislature on 10 March. In her report, the President noted that she had requested the Ministry of Justice and the Law Reform Commission to analyse the recommendations with legal implications and explore options for implementing those without legal implications. The second quarterly report, scheduled for June, has not yet been submitted. As yet, no structures have been established to formally address the recommendations. The establishment of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights continued to be delayed, as its nominees were rejected outright by the legislature in February. This is delaying progress towards implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations, since one of the Commission's responsibilities will be to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

8. Anti-corruption efforts gained increased momentum, even as the General Audit Commission's high-profile ministerial audits, covering the Ministries of Education, Finance, Health, Lands, Mines and Energy and Public Works, generated heated media debate and accusations that the Commission was pursuing a political agenda. While the lack of basic internal controls was a common audit finding, the substance of the audits was overshadowed by the political and acrimonious public debate about the Commission's credibility, resulting in limited implementation of the recommendations in the audits and increased perceptions of impunity. Sharp public disputes between the Commission and audited entities could undermine the Government's anti-corruption drive.

9. The Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission concluded investigations into eight cases and recommended four for prosecution, including the former Inspector General of the Liberia National Police and several Ministry of Finance employees. The Commission also continued its nationwide anti-corruption campaign. Meanwhile, in July the first guilty verdict in a major anti-corruption case involving the illegal transfer of Central Bank of Liberia funds was delivered in Criminal Court "C".

B. Security situation

10. The overall security situation in the country is generally stable, but fragile. Ethnic and communal tensions, disputes over access to land and resources, and a lack of confidence in the criminal justice system continued to affect security. Serious criminal activity, including rape and armed robbery, remained prevalent. Of particular concern is that over 70 per cent of reported rapes during the period involved victims under the age of 16.

11. Relatively minor disputes continued to rapidly escalate into major destabilizing incidents, as exemplified by widespread violence in Lofa County in February between the predominantly Christian Lorma and Muslim Mandingo communities that was triggered by allegations of a ritual killing, aggravating existing ethnic tensions. The two groups, armed with cutlasses, shotguns and other weapons, attacked each other, and places of worship and other property. Four people were killed, 18 were injured, and numerous churches, mosques and homes were destroyed or burnt. During the chaos, 58 prisoners escaped from the prison, 39 of whom remain at large. The intervention of UNMIL military and police, together with the Emergency Response Unit of the Liberia National Police, was required to restore order.

12. A tense situation also arose in Harper, Maryland County, in April, when a witchdoctor identified alleged perpetrators of a suspected ritual killing, resulting in the arrest of 18 individuals, including influential county figures, sparking protest from some 300 community members. The significant presence of the national police and UNMIL prevented an outbreak of violence. Emergency Response Unit personnel remained deployed in Harper for weeks. This case remains ongoing, and six of the original suspects are still detained awaiting trial. A spate of smaller incidents involving witchdoctors naming alleged perpetrators of unsolved murders soon followed in Nimba and Lofa counties.

13. There have been a number of cases of mob violence, some prompted by lack of confidence in the police and the wider justice system. On 27 February, an off-duty

police officer was set ablaze in Monrovia by an angry mob after he shot a man for undisclosed reasons. An Armed Forces of Liberia soldier, who attempted to rescue the officer, was attacked by the mob and subsequently died of his injuries. Early in July, student elections at the University of Liberia turned violent on two occasions, resulting in eight injured students. As political attention is increasingly focused towards the 2011 elections, some mob action has taken on political connotations. On 11 July, the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives and his supporters allegedly assaulted and seriously wounded a police officer who, while fulfilling official duties, had earlier impounded a truck belonging to the Deputy Speaker. Approximately 200 armed partisans from his party, the Congress for Democratic Change, subsequently prevented the police from questioning the representative in a siege lasting several hours.

C. Economic situation

14. Significant progress was made in advancing structural reforms critical to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund-led Extended Credit Facility programme and the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. The HIPC completion point, fundamental for Liberia's ability to access international credit, was approved by the boards of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank on 29 June, and US$ 4.6 billion of external debt was cancelled. To achieve this, various actions were completed, including a second round of audits of five ministries, implementation of the Public Financial Management Law and passage of a new Investment Act.

15. Liberia's economy is slowly recovering from the global economic crisis. Growth in 2010 is expected at 6.3 per cent, up from 4.6 per cent in 2009, driven by an increase in exports and foreign direct investment. At the end of May, inflation stood at 7.2 per cent and is expected to average 7 per cent in 2010. Revenues from rubber production have increased because of a rebound in world prices, while both the Bong Mines and Yekepa iron ore operations, delayed by the global crisis, have resumed preparations for large-scale extraction, which should generate some employment.

16. The proposed national budget for 2010/11, of $347 million, was prepared in accordance with the new Public Financial Management Law and submitted to the legislature in May. As at the end of July, the budget had not been adopted, and negotiations continued to determine allocations for priority sectors.

17. Upon the completion of the second year of implementation of Liberia's poverty reduction strategy in March, the Government released a progress report highlighting developments in each of the strategy's four pillars: peace and security; economic revitalization; rule of law and governance; and infrastructure and basic services. A Cabinet retreat is planned for August to develop action plans to achieve unmet deliverables and outcomes in the strategy's final year. The Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs hosted a summit on aid effectiveness in April to herald a new aid management policy that will be launched in August. Meanwhile, in June, efforts began to formulate a post-poverty reduction strategy, post-HIPC national development agenda that links the national capacity development strategy to a larger national vision. Coordinated by the Ministry and the Governance Commission, the visioning exercise seeks to consolidate institutions of good

governance and build unity and national identity through institutional change, citizenship and decentralization while supporting economic growth and longer-term development to make Liberia a middle-income country.

D. Humanitarian situation

18. The Government and its international and local partners addressed residual humanitarian needs along with developmental activities. The Government faces daily challenges in assuming full responsibility for service delivery, while many non-governmental organizations, which supply the bulk of basic services, struggle to finance their activities. Inter-agency contingency plans for potential population influxes from Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire were updated to ensure that response mechanisms are in place. Severe seasonal flooding remains a major challenge, affecting thousands annually. Slightly more than 64,000 Liberian refugees remain in countries of asylum. Despite recent slow returns, more than 123,000 refugees have returned to Liberia since 2004.

E. Regional situation

19. UNMIL continued to monitor the transitional and electoral process in Guinea closely. Regular joint border patrols involving UNMIL, as well as Guinean and Liberian security forces, confirmed that the situation along Liberia's borders with Guinea remained calm, apart from a minor boundary dispute between Liberian and Guinean authorities in Lofa County.

20. The presence of Liberian ex-combatants and refugees in western Côte d'Ivoire remained a concern for the Mission. UNMIL, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted a joint field mission to western Côte d'Ivoire in June, which found that the estimated 1,500 to 2,000 Liberian combatants associated with Ivorian militias do not pose an immediate threat to Liberia. UNMIL will nevertheless continue to monitor the situation closely and will continue to engage in joint border operations with the Governments of Guinea and Sierra Leone as well as ONUCI.

21. In May, a two-year covert United States Drug Enforcement Agency and Liberia National Security Agency operation culminated in the arrest of seven suspects for conspiracy to traffic an estimated 6,000 kilograms of cocaine, valued at some $100 million, to the United States through Liberia. A significant case of human trafficking was also uncovered in March, which involved 40 trafficked Bangladeshi victims, brought to Liberia under the pretence of work but later abandoned. Owing to porous borders, weak national security institutions, limited law enforcement capacity and inadequate legislation, Liberia remains extremely vulnerable to drug and human trafficking, and these incidents underline the growing threat. In February, Liberia became a party to the West Africa Coast Initiative, with the signing of the Freetown Commitment on Combating Illicit Trafficking of Drugs and Transnational Organized Crime in West Africa, which should help to build capacity in the region to combat transnational crime, including drug-related crime.

III. Implementation of the mandate of the Mission

A. Security sector reform

Development of a national security strategy and architecture

22. The Government's security pillar continued to provide the framework for reform of Liberia's security sector, in line with the 2008 national security strategy, with training and capacity-building under way across key security agencies. After considerable delay, the Government forwarded the draft Liberia Security Reform and Intelligence Bill to the legislature in June, representing an important step towards institutionalization of the new security architecture. The passage of the bill will be crucial to streamlining the sector and enhancing information-sharing and coordination between agencies.

23. Despite these advances, the fact that security institutions may not receive the resources necessary for their progressive growth and development is a cause for concern. The proposed national budget for 2010/11 does not allocate sufficient resources for key security agencies, but discussions are under way with the legislature to somewhat increase allocations for key security agencies. Security agencies, including the police, will still face a funding gap that could prevent them from meeting their higher operational and human resource needs. The county security mechanism, launched in December 2009, has not yet begun functioning. Liberia also lacks the legal framework and institutional capacity for small arms control and the disposal of explosive ordnance is still being done by UNMIL.

Armed Forces of Liberia

24. Since officially completing the United States-supported initial training at the end of 2009, the Armed Forces of Liberia assumed budgetary and functional responsibility for their training, supported by 61 United States military personnel, under the authority of Liberian defence sector reform mentors. The programme primarily provides training in infantry tactics and operational planning as well as mentorship in logistics, engineering, military justice, administration, medical services, and communications. The army has completed several training evolutions since January and developed an annual training programme. Overall skills remain rudimentary and in need of further development, however, UNMIL also supports military capacity-building by participating in joint training with specialized units, and is in the process of identifying outstanding needs with the mentorship programme and the Ministry of Defence, to help to guide the development of increased UNMIL assistance.

25. The army continued to prepare itself to eventually assume responsibility for control of its weapons and ammunition, which remain under the administrative control of the United States. Although the leadership skills of the officers are developing, seconded officers from countries members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) continue to occupy leadership positions in the army, and are expected to do so for the foreseeable future. The newly established Liberian Coast Guard, comprising 50 personnel, was inaugurated in February. It has reached initial operational capability in maritime search and rescue operations, despite its nascent equipping and training levels. Incidents of misconduct within the Armed Forces of Liberia continued to raise concern. In February, six off-duty

soldiers reportedly assaulted locals in Gbarnga, Bong County, while three soldiers were investigated for allegedly stabbing and killing two men in Margibi County in April. Some disciplinary action has been taken in cases of misconduct, but additional measures are required to ensure that the new army earns the people's trust and maintains professionalism and respect for the rule of law.

Liberia National Police

26. Progress was made in the development of the Liberia National Police and the implementation of its strategic plan: more than 120 projects are currently under way. Following a briefing by the national police to the donor community in Monrovia in February, a number of donors solidified pledges or showed increased interest in providing assistance for immediate police priorities. Despite this support, the Liberia National Police face massive budget constraints even as operational demands increase.

27. The Liberia National Police have embarked on institutional development in a number of areas, including the introduction of a performance appraisal system that will be utilized nationwide, and the development of basic systems for inventory accounting and management. The forensic unit now has the capability to undertake comparative analysis of rounds and ammunition. In April, the Minister of Justice signed the Professional Standards Division Policy and Procedure, and the UNMIL police component assisted in developing a database to record and track cases of police misconduct. Increasing public confidence in the police remained a key objective, and efforts were made to build the capacity of the Liberia National Police Public Information Office. With support from the Peacebuilding Fund, the police are rolling out nationwide community policing programmes to improve police-community relations.

28. The fifth class of the armed Emergency Response Unit graduated in May, bringing its strength to 344 officers, including four female officers. These officers continued to gain experience and confidence and routinely supported anti-robbery operations in Monrovia and reinforced unarmed police officers responding to violent flare-ups or threats to law and order outside Monrovia. However, challenges continued to be experienced in the institutional development of the Unit's command structure, owing to vacant supervisory posts and a lack of incentives to serve in the Unit because of budgetary constraints. The Unit also struggled to maintain a fully operational vehicle fleet and requires additional specialized equipment. In view of the decision to focus on training and equipping the Police Support Unit, which is deemed critical to security planning for the 2011 elections and for upcoming transition planning, there are currently no plans to train additional Emergency Response Unit officers.

29. Given this shift in priority, the intention is to increase the strength of the Police Support Unit from 150 to 600 fully trained and armed officers by the end of June 2011. So far, donors have been forthcoming with assistance to reach this ambitious goal, primarily for training and equipment. However, significant shortfalls remain and generous funding support will be required from Liberia's partners to build the Unit's vehicle fleet, communications system, barracks and other infrastructure, and to procure weapons and related materiel.

30. Despite border management and immigration challenges facing Liberia, the development of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization has lagged far behind

that of the police, mainly because of insufficient donor funding. However, the Bureau recently began implementation of its strategic plan, focusing on a number of organizational reforms that do not require funding. It is hoped that assistance will be forthcoming for further institutional restructuring, communications, infrastructure and mobility. A second group of 50 immigration officers are receiving basic training through the Ghana Immigration Service with donor assistance, as part of a programme that will train a total of 200 officers by the end of 2011.

B. Strengthening judicial, legal and corrections institutions

31. Significant challenges continued to confront Liberia's judicial, legal and corrections sectors. Lack of capacity, infrastructure and equipment, outdated laws and legal frameworks, and dependence on donor funding continued to impede development. Serious incidents of public disorder in Lofa and Maryland counties are illustrative of the frustration with the justice system, and the violence that erupts as a result.

32. However, some progress was made. A national conference, opened by the President, was held in April on enhancing access to justice, bringing together various stakeholders to discuss the harmonization of Liberia's formal and customary justice systems, a substantial step towards providing the Government with policy options in this area. The Ministry of Justice increased its efforts to address backlogs in the justice system, by focusing its task force on pretrial detention on the root causes of bottlenecks and by strengthening the working relationship between prosecutors and the police. The Ministry of Justice has also made progress in other development initiatives in line with its strategic plan and the poverty reduction strategy. In addition, the Judicial Institute started its 12-month intensive professional magistrates training programme in March with 64 students, and the first Judicial Conference since the end of the conflict was convened. However, longstanding management and other internal problems continued to have a negative impact upon institutional reform and other development initiatives for the judiciary.

33. Sexual violence remained a major concern, and the specialized prosecution unit and court struggled to respond to the high number of reported cases. During the visit of my Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict to Liberia in June, an agreement was reached with the President on the possibility of deploying rule of law experts to explore options for addressing cases of sexual violence. In addition, under the United Nations/Government of Liberia Joint Programme on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, security personnel posted at border points received training on preventing sexual or gender-based violence, including trafficking.

34. Although corrections continued to lack adequate donor support, the Minister of Justice maintained efforts to develop the sector, exploring options such as parole and probation, and implementing inmate counselling programmes. The Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation, supported by UNMIL and other partners, continued to develop projects from its strategic plan, including reform of corrections legislation. Security at corrections facilities remained precarious because of low staffing levels and weak infrastructure, but the introduction of disciplinary measures has contributed to a reduction in escapes. Of the nine jailbreaks reported during this period, the most serious was the escape of 58 detainees during the civil disturbance in Lofa County in February. Overcrowding at prisons, partially due to high rates of

pretrial detention, remained a serious concern, although the mobile court at the Monrovia Central Prison helped to keep the prison population at that institution relatively stable. Meanwhile, a new 72-bed facility in Sanniquellie, Nimba County, funded by the Peacebuilding Fund, has been completed, while three facilities are being built and another rehabilitated using the Mission's quick-impact project funds. Two of these facilities are in counties which have never had detention facilities. The recruitment and training of 50 new corrections officers under a Peacebuilding Fund project was completed, and the officers have been added to the payroll.

C. Human rights

35. The Government continued to make some progress in promoting and protecting human rights. There were, however, continued delays in establishing key frameworks and institutions to guarantee accountability and ensure human rights protection. Of particular concern is the continued delay in the establishment of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, whose commissioners have yet to be confirmed. An independent committee of experts, who were mandated in March to identify new candidates, submitted a shortlist of 12 possible nominees to the President in July, from which seven will be nominated and submitted to the legislature for confirmation. Continued delays in domesticating the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aimed at abolishing the death penalty, were also of concern. While the Government has not authorized executions since 1979, courts continue to issue death sentences, including 11 during the reporting period, and 25 inmates are currently on death row.

36. To address the poor situation of children in alternative care institutions, the Government recently adopted regulations to establish improved care and protection systems, and is also strengthening monitoring mechanisms to improve conditions and enhance protection of institutionalized children. The lack of appropriate types of care institutions is also a concern, frequently resulting in children being detained in adult corrections facilities for significant periods.

D. Consolidation of State authority throughout the country

37. The Government maintained efforts to consolidate its authority throughout the country, but progress was hampered by limited human capacity and inadequate infrastructure at the county level. Although programmes, such as the Senior Executive Service, were designed to deploy qualified staff to county administrations, many civil servants do not remain in their posts because of the continued lack of offices, accommodation and poor communications. County coordination mechanisms suffered from limited representation of local actors, especially line ministries and other officials.

38. In July, the Ministry of Internal Affairs held its first national retreat for senior staff, including county officials and chiefs, to improve the performance of the local administration in service delivery. Meanwhile, county public sector employees received regular salary payments, and the pilot electronic payment system to employee accounts is now effective in four counties. There are plans to decentralize the entire payment system; meanwhile, payments in other counties rely heavily on UNMIL logistics and security support.

39. The United Nations continued its county support team programme to strengthen government capacity at county and district levels. To underpin the administrative decentralization policy at the district level, the Government, with support from the United Nations, constructed three district administration buildings during the reporting period. Some progress was made in planning and public expenditure management for county administrations, and the United Nations provided management and leadership training for 120 local officials throughout the country.

40. Despite limited progress in the legislature related to the draft national decentralization policy, the Governance Commission and the Ministry of Internal Affairs launched a countrywide civic education campaign on issues such as citizens' rights, duties and obligations under a decentralized system and worked to formulate a legal framework and implementation strategy.

41. Infrastructure, including roads, energy and ports, continue to be a major priority for the Government. However, Liberia's increasingly heavy rainfall and expanding rainy season seriously restrict implementation of infrastructural projects and other development activities. Despite limited funding, modest progress has been made in both primary and secondary road rehabilitation outside Monrovia. There has been no significant addition of paved roads outside Monrovia, although major repairs were made to the Monrovia, Gbarnga and Voinjama axis. The south-eastern corridors from Zwedru to Harper and Greenville deteriorated drastically during the latest rainy season, almost completely cutting off Maryland and Grand Kru counties. Work started on the World Bank's project of 75 kilometres of road linking Pleebo and Barclayville, but it has been seriously hampered by heavy rains.

E. Management of natural resources

42. The Presidential Task Force on Diamonds continued efforts to implement the recommendations of the Kimberley Process review mission and the Panel of Experts report of 2009 (S/2009/640), aimed at improving control over diamond mining and trade. The transition of the task force into a precious minerals oversight committee that would provide a platform for broad stakeholder involvement and transparent management oversight is pending approval by the President. The difficulty in verifying the numerous reports of illegal mining and smuggling of gold and diamonds and illicit regional trading networks remained a challenge. Meanwhile, destructive gold mining in Sapo National Park continued unabated. The Government began to engage in operational planning for the removal of illegal miners from the nature reserve.

43. The Mineral Cadastre Information Management System, a database of exploration and mining licences, has been established. Once fully functional, the system should help to restrict corrupt practices and improve accountability and the accuracy of mining records. New exploration regulations governing the administration of exploration licences and clarifying companies' obligations have been in use since March. The mineral policy of Liberia was also released in March. The policy is expected to guide decision-making and strategizing for programmes in the mining sector, and support the sustainable management of resources.

44. Allocated forest management contracts have started to have a positive impact. Since commercial logging resumed in 2009, the 10 operational timber companies

have paid approximately $11 million in taxes and fees, the most significant of which is the land rental bid fee, 60 per cent of which is directed equally to forest communities and the counties. Individual social agreements reached on profit-sharing and social infrastructure between companies and affected communities will also increase benefits, if adhered to. In order to address challenges faced in the implementation of the recently adopted Community Rights Law, the Government initiated stakeholders' consultative meetings with a view to developing regulations on critical issues, such as land ownership, commercialization and revenue-sharing.

45. Government revenues from rubber have increased with the recovery of global rubber prices in 2010, although higher prices have also triggered increases in rubber theft and related violence. The private takeover of Guthrie Rubber Plantation in January has brought renovations to the plantation, and increased employment opportunities. In July, however, some community members protested against what they claimed was inadequate compensation for farm land to be subsumed within the concession area and concerns are increasing that new challenges may emerge for the plantation. The operation of an effective interim management team at Sinoe Rubber Plantation remained a challenge, and there is a risk that recent gains towards normalizing the situation there could be reversed.

F. Governance

46. The Government accelerated measures to reform the public sector and improve governance. To advance the civil service reform process, the Civil Service Agency, with the Governance Commission and the Liberia Institute for Public Administration, developed a strategy to accelerate the long-standing mandate and functional review processes across all ministries, departments and agencies. New human resources instruments, unit terms of reference and staff profiles were developed, and measures intensified to convert the civil service to an optimum size and address persistent payroll inaccuracies.

47. The Land Commission was inaugurated in March and has formulated a five-year workplan to review existing land-related laws and regulations with comprehensive proposals for reforms. International partners created a working group on land to promote strategic and coordinated support for the Commission. However, the Constitutional Review Task Force and the Law Reform Commission made limited progress, largely because of delays in their inauguration, budgetary support and enabling legislation.

48. With the end of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme, attention shifted to instituting new arrangements and a strategy to ensure proper economic governance, now that Liberia has reached the HIPC completion point. A model for overall economic governance and institutional capacity development, which ensures complete national ownership while acknowledging capacity gaps still requiring partner support, was presented to the Liberia Reconstruction and Development Committee in July and is expected to be endorsed by the Cabinet soon.

49. Despite significant challenges, there were advances in the development of the legislature's capacity. As part of its modernization programme, the legislature established a bill tracking system early in June in collaboration with the National Democratic Institute and began construction of its library, which will house more

than 2,000 legal books. However, the legislature was challenged in fulfilling its legislative oversight and representational functions. Legislative performance report cards from the Liberia Democratic Institute and the Catholic Church's Justice and Peace Commission decried legislators' infrequent consultations with constituents, the lack of active legislative offices in constituencies, and their tendency to hold closed executive sessions to deliberate critical national issues.

50. A new initiative by State and non-State actors to support the fight against corruption and create integrity standards in Government and the private sector, the National Integrity Forum, was launched in July to coordinate advocacy for relevant legislation and strengthened anti-corruption institutions and policy instruments. Meanwhile, complaints about the management of county development and other funds continued to stir controversy. In Nimba County, civil society petitions to the President led to the resignation of the then-Minister of Internal Affairs over criticism of his management of a development fund.

G. Peacebuilding

51. By my letter dated 14 June 2010 to the President of the Security Council, I transmitted Liberia's request, dated 27 May, to be placed on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission to build national capacity in the rule of law and security sectors and support national reconciliation efforts. Since 2007, the Peacebuilding Fund has provided $15 million for 25 projects aimed at addressing the legacy of division and distrust in the country. A midterm independent evaluation of the Fund's projects, completed in March, revealed an overall 60 per cent completion rate and that most projects successfully addressed conflict drivers and changed attitudes. However, the review highlighted the need to better mainstream peacebuilding across the work of the United Nations and other partners.

H. Integration of the United Nations system

52. On 25 February, the Government of Liberia submitted a formal request to the United Nations to become a "Delivering as One" country. This will provide a strategic and operational framework to increase the collective impact and transparency of United Nations activities, while also enhancing government ownership. Meanwhile, a review of United Nations joint programmes will help to improve future combined support to the Government to address identified priorities.

53. While the integration of the United Nations system in Liberia has advanced through common services and management and coordination mechanisms, the Delivering as One approach will transform the United Nations into a more effective partner to the Government. It also provides a backdrop for planning the eventual transfer of some of the civilian-related responsibilities of UNMIL to other United Nations entities through the current United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the integrated strategic framework used in Liberia.

IV. Cross-cutting issues within the Mission

A. Public information

54. The Mission conducted campaigns on key issues with its regular partners, including Government ministries, United Nations agencies and the local media. A community policing awareness campaign, designed to encourage communities to work closely with the police, was launched in all counties, using UNMIL Radio, community-level meetings and the local media. Similar campaigns were conducted on sexual exploitation and abuse, HIV/AIDS, and the importance of immunizing children. The Mission also strengthened local capacity by conducting nine workshops for Liberian media professionals to improve the quality, including balance and accuracy, of reporting on the electoral process and human rights issues. UNMIL radio was utilized during the Lofa crisis in February, owing to its nationwide coverage, to help dispel rumours and appeal for calm.

B. HIV/AIDS

55. UNMIL conducted awareness-raising, prevention training and sensitization on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections for newly deployed peacekeeping personnel and provided confidential HIV testing services, condoms, counselling, and post-exposure prophylaxis kits.

C. Gender

56. The Government continued efforts to strengthen gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment mechanisms. The women's legislative caucus presented the draft Gender Equity in Politics Act requiring that a minimum of 30 per cent female candidates be put forward by political parties. The Government also established a task force to implement recommendations in the 2009 report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

D. Personnel conduct and discipline

57. The Mission continued to implement strategies complying with my policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse, emphasizing preventive measures, such as conducting regular induction and refresher training for all personnel, risk assessments of military installations and spot checks of off-limit establishments. During the period under review, 3,971 UNMIL personnel were trained on conduct issues. The Mission provided integrated training on HIV/AIDS, personnel welfare and stress management, and conduct and discipline. To build awareness of sexual exploitation and abuse and community-based reporting mechanisms, UNMIL provided training to schools, religious leaders and local communities in close proximity to United Nations installations.

58. Since February, 14 cases of serious misconduct have been reported, including eight allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. The overall number of minor misconduct cases decreased. UNMIL received numerous reports of thefts of

Mission-issued handheld radios, reportedly used for loan collateral or sold, which has implications for staff safety.

E. Security and safety of United Nations personnel

59. Crime posed the greatest security threat to United Nations personnel and property, especially in Monrovia, where 90 per cent of the armed robberies reported since February were committed. There was, however, a decrease in reported incidents of weapon-related robbery, with 144 armed robberies reported, most involving bladed weapons or firearms, including seven incidents targeting United Nations personnel and two incidents targeting other foreign nationals. Also during this period, 129 non-weapon-related crimes against United Nations personnel were reported, including burglary and assault. Two national staff members and two military personnel died because of illness during the reporting period. One UNMIL soldier died as a result of a shooting incident, a police officer was killed while directing traffic, and an international contractor drowned.

V. Mission deployment

Military component

60. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1885 (2009), in which the Council endorsed the recommendations in my special report of 10 June 2009 (S/2009/299), UNMIL completed the third stage of its drawdown between October 2009 and May 2010. One battalion from Ethiopia and three attack helicopters from Ukraine were repatriated by February, and a battalion and 72 armoured personnel carriers from Bangladesh were repatriated by the end of May. Other units also reduced personnel during rotations, bringing to 2,209 the total military personnel repatriated from Liberia during the third stage of the drawdown.

61. As indicated in my previous reports, the pre-drawdown adjustments to UNMIL in 2006, together with the three stages of the Mission's formal drawdown, completed in September 2008, March 2009 and May 2010, respectively, reduced UNMIL troop strength from 15,250 to the current authorized strength of 8,102, including 150 troops deployed at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown. As recommended in my special report, the 7,952 troops in Liberia should be maintained until after the 2011 elections. The timelines for the further reduction of the UNMIL military component would be determined on the findings and recommendations of a comprehensive technical assessment mission to be deployed to Liberia after the elections that will focus on preparations for the handover of security responsibilities from UNMIL to national authorities.

62. With respect to the 7,952 troops in Liberia, UNMIL maintains its force headquarters in Monrovia, and has operating forces deployed to two sectors, each comprising three infantry battalions. Forty-four troop- contributing countries are represented in the force, which includes 87 staff officers, 7,837 troops and 128 military observers (see annex). There are 158 women in the force. The UNMIL battalion-sized quick reaction force is based in Monrovia, with two forward operating bases adjacent to main communication routes to the Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire borders, minimizing reaction time. The UNMIL's 250-strong military guard

force, deployed at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, was reduced to 150 troops, as recommended in my letter dated 28 December 2009 to the President of the Security Council (S/2009/679). The guard force has consolidated its presence on the Court's premises.

Police component

63. As at 30 July, the UNMIL police strength stood at 1,347 personnel out of an authorized ceiling of 1,375, including 468 police advisers, 837 officers in seven formed police units, 29 correction officers and 13 immigration advisers. There are 203 women in the police component. Three formed police units are deployed in Monrovia, and one unit each in Bong, Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh and Lofa counties.

64. As UNMIL and the Government engage in transition planning for the handover of security responsibility from UNMIL to Liberian authorities, identified gaps in the development of the Liberia National Police will require highly technical advisory support. The UNMIL police component will thus need highly specialized expertise to support the development of the police, including civilian expertise, in areas such as the design and implementation of management systems, information management and communications, human resource management, financial planning, institutional planning and research, and project development. This additional expertise will be even more critical after the passage of pending security legislation, which envisages that both the National Bureau of Investigation and the Drug Enforcement Agency will be subsumed into the Liberia National Police.

VI. Future direction of the Mission and transition planning

65. In my special report of 10 June 2009 (S/2009/299), I provided a preliminary reflection on the future of UNMIL, indicating that the Mission's military drawdown would resume after the 2011 elections, security conditions permitting. In anticipation of the eventual withdrawal of UNMIL, joint planning for the transition of security responsibilities from UNMIL to national authorities has begun, involving the Government, UNMIL, the United Nations country team, and other concerned stakeholders, including ECOWAS and bilateral partners.

66. On 15 July, the National Security Council, chaired by the President, formally initiated the transition planning process, mandating the formation of a joint transition planning working group, composed of Government and United Nations representatives. A core group, comprising Government ministers, senior officials and my Special Representative, will be formed to provide strategic direction to the working group, while providing the formal link to the National Security Council and the security pillar, which includes international partners. The working group has been requested to conduct a thorough situational assessment, including a threat assessment and the mapping of national capacities and gaps, which will serve as the basis for future planning and for the prioritization of development activities in the security sector.

67. The National Security Council's actions followed an informal workshop facilitated by the Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum in Monrovia in June, so that senior Liberian Government and United Nations officials, as well as other stakeholders, could hear about the experiences of Burundi, Sierra Leone, Timor-

Leste and Kosovo from experts who had been involved in those transitions, and draw lessons applicable to Liberia. It was agreed that, the differences between Liberia and the other cases notwithstanding, valuable lessons could be drawn, in particular the importance of early planning based on a comprehensive understanding of the situation in the country, ensuring national ownership of the process, prioritizing security sector reform as a basis for successful transition, involving civil society and key stakeholders, and keeping the population informed. In the meantime, planning for the handover of civilian functions is also progressing and will converge when appropriate with planning for the handover of security responsibilities. While it is too early to provide specific parameters or timelines for the transition, I intend to include regular updates on the planning process in my future reports on UNMIL.

VII. Financial aspects

68. The General Assembly, by its resolution 64/280 of 24 June 2010, appropriated the amount of $524 million, equivalent to some $43.7 million per month, for the maintenance of UNMIL for the period from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNMIL beyond 30 September 2010, the cost of maintaining the Mission until 30 June 2011 would be limited to the amounts approved by the General Assembly.

69. As at 31 May 2010, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNMIL amounted to $36.5 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $1,276.4 million.

70. As at 30 June 2010, amounts owed to troop- and formed police contributors totalled some $32.3 million. Reimbursement of troop and formed police costs and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made for the periods up to 31 May and 31 March 2010, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

VIII. Observations

71. Liberia continues to make significant progress in consolidating its peace and security. However, potentially destabilizing factors, such as persistent political and social divides, limited progress on national reconciliation, and the widespread perception that impunity is prevalent continue to threaten the gains achieved so far. As events in Lofa and Maryland counties demonstrate, low public confidence in the State's capacity to deliver justice frequently leads to rapid flare-ups, threatening overall law and order.

72. Security institutions continue to develop and make progress, but do not yet have the capacity to respond independently of UNMIL, especially outside Monrovia. It is crucial that the development of the security sector becomes a main priority for the Government and the international community so that those institutions become independently operational, and are sufficiently resourced. The submission by the Executive of the long-awaited Liberia Security Reform and Intelligence Bill to the legislature is a positive development, but maintaining momentum to ensure its early adoption will be crucial.

73. The strategic planning for the rule of law sector was important for visioning and planning for both the Ministry of Justice and the judiciary. The development of implementation plans is long overdue, however. The Ministry of Justice has made some progress in defining the road ahead, which is a positive development, but the judiciary should be encouraged to implement reforms as soon as possible to improve the overall functioning of the justice sector. Public confidence in the criminal justice system is still minimal, and improving its functioning will be the key to increasing its credibility. Despite nascent institutions, it is imperative that all Liberians, regardless of official function, show respect for the rule of law.

74. The elections in 2011 will be a critical milestone for Liberia and test the capacity of national institutions. Long delays in reaching an agreement on threshold legislation have hindered much of the needed planning for those elections. Clarity concerning the framework within which the elections will be conducted is required to ensure their overall legitimacy. I am, however, encouraged by donors' indications of financial support for the elections.

75. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report and its recommendations laid the groundwork for intense debate in Liberia on how to approach the atrocities of the past and address the root causes of Liberia's conflict. The people of Liberia will deal with these issues for years to come. I call upon the Government to work with all stakeholders to develop a plan on how to take the recommendations forward as part of overall efforts to promote national reconciliation, which will be vital to long-term peace. I strongly urge the Government to promptly nominate commissioners for the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, and for the legislature to confirm them to make the Commission operational as soon as possible. This is vital to enable proper follow-up to the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but also to ensure that Liberia has a publicly accessible human rights institution.

76. I welcome the work that has been done so far to address corruption in Liberia, including the completion of several audits, but more is needed to ensure that action is taken to implement recommendations, including prosecution, if required. The widespread perception that corruption is condoned, even if not necessarily committed, by government officials weakens overall legitimacy and undermines important development efforts. The fight against corruption remains a challenge and should be pursued vigorously by Liberian authorities and be supported by the international community.

77. Liberia is to be congratulated for reaching the HIPC completion point and exercising national ownership and fiscal conservatism regarding economic governance and for deciding to pursue a visioning exercise to capture longer-term goals for economic growth and citizenship. As the implementation of the poverty reduction strategy will soon enter its third and final year, it will be important that the Government continue to focus on overdue deliverables and end results. The international community should be prepared to further support these critical interventions.

78. Despite the efforts to improve Liberia's infrastructure, the dilapidated state of the road networks, seaports and airports remains one of the most difficult challenges facing the Government and the Liberian people. I therefore appeal for more international and domestic financing to rebuild the country's damaged road network and restore port facilities.

79. I am pleased that the Government, with its international partners, has initiated planning for the eventual handover of security responsibilities from UNMIL to national authorities. As described in paragraph 66 above, it is important that this planning be informed by a comprehensive situational assessment, including an institutional and legislative gap analysis, so that critical remaining needs in the security sector may be addressed. The United Nations for its part will continue to work towards the achievement of a steady state of security in Liberia with national security institutions that are capable of independently maintaining stability. The success of the transition will however require the full support and engagement of all stakeholders in the process, including Liberia's partners and national authorities. I urge the international community to increase its financial and technical support for Liberia's security sector to ensure that remaining gaps are addressed.

80. In my special report of 10 June 2009, I presented recommendations for the third stage of the UNMIL drawdown. Those reductions, which were effected between October 2009 and May 2010 in accordance with resolution 1885 (2009), included the repatriation of 2,029 troops, 72 armoured personnel carriers and three attack helicopters, leaving the current authorized military strength of UNMIL at 8,102 personnel, including 7,952 troops in Liberia and 150 deployed at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown. The police component maintained its authorized strength of 1,375. In accordance with my special report, I recommend that the Mission's current military and police levels should be maintained until after the 2011 elections, which has become a core benchmark for UNMIL drawdown and withdrawal. Given the range of factors related to instability, and the limited capacity of national security institutions to respond independently of UNMIL, those recommendations are still valid. The 150-strong military guard force deployed at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown should also remain until the Court completes its work. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of UNMIL, at its current strength, for a period of one year, until 30 September 2011.

81. In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to my Special Representative for Liberia, Ellen Margrethe Løj, and UNMIL civilian and uniformed personnel for their contribution towards peace consolidation in Liberia. I would also like to thank all troop- and police-contributing countries, ECOWAS, the African Union, the International Contact Group on Liberia, the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, multilateral and bilateral donors, and international and local non-governmental organizations, for their commitment and contributions to sustain the peace and support development in Liberia.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Liberia: military and police strength
(as at 30 July 2010)

	Military component					
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Formed police units*	*Civilian police*
Argentina	0	0	0	0	0	9
Bangladesh	12	7	1 434	1 452	0	17
Benin	2	1	0	3	0	0
Bolivia	2	1	0	3	0	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	0	0	0	0	11
Brazil	2	2	0	4	0	0
Bulgaria	2	0	0	2	0	0
China	2	7	558	567	0	18
Croatia	0	2	0	2	0	0
Czech Republic	0	0	0	0	0	5
Denmark	3	2	0	5	0	0
Ecuador	2	1	0	3	0	0
El Salvador	2	0	0	2	0	6
Ethiopia	9	4	0	13	0	0
Egypt	7	0	0	7	0	8
Fiji	0	0	0	0	0	30
Finland	0	2	0	2	0	0
France	0	2	0	2	0	0
Gambia	2	0	0	2	0	23
Germany	0	0	0	0	0	5
Ghana	8	7	700	715	0	32
Iceland	0	0	0	0	0	2
India	0	0	0	0	244	4
Indonesia	1	0	0	1	0	0
Jordan	4	5	115	124	233	16
Kenya	0	0	0	0	0	16
Kyrgyzstan	2	0	0	2	0	4
Mali	1	0	0	1	0	0
Malaysia	6	0	0	6	0	0
Mongolia	0	2	147	149	0	0
Montenegro	2	0	0	2	0	0
Namibia	1	3	0	4	0	5
Nepal	2	3	15	20	240	19
Niger	1	0	0	1	0	0
Nigeria	12	10	1 540	1 562	120	34

Country	Military component				Formed police units	Civilian police
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops	Total		
Norway	0	0	0	0	0	9
Pakistan	7	10	2 938	2 955	0	26
Paraguay	2	1	0	3	0	0
Peru	2	2	0	4	0	0
Philippines	2	2	115	119	0	31
Poland	2	0	0	2	0	3
Republic of Korea	1	1	0	2	0	0
Republic of Moldova	2	0	0	2	0	0
Romania	2	0	0	2	0	0
Russian Federation	4	0	0	4	0	6
Rwanda	0	0	0	0	0	4
Senegal	1	1	0	2	0	0
Serbia	4	0	0	4	0	6
Sierra Leone	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sri Lanka	0	0	0	0	0	13
Sweden	0	0	0	0	0	12
Switzerland	0	0	0	0	0	2
Togo	2	1	0	3	0	0
Turkey	0	0	0	0	0	30
Uganda	0	0	0	0	0	15
Ukraine	2	2	275	279	0	18
United Republic of Tanzania	0	0	0	0	0	3
United States of America	3	5	0	8	0	9
Uruguay	0	0	0	0	0	3
Yemen	0	1	0	1	0	6
Zambia	3	0	0	3	0	22
Zimbabwe	2	0	0	2	0	27
Total	**128**	**87**	**7 837**	**8 052**	**837**	**510**

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